

**HISTORY**  
*of*  
**BALLARD'S BRIDGE  
CHURCH**









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LICENSED BY BALLARD'S BRIDGE, AUGUST 9, 1902.

TOOK THE B.A. DEGREE AT WAKE FOREST, MAY 22, 1908.

ORDAINED AT BALLARD'S BRIDGE, JULY 12, 1908.

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**BY**  
**J. T. BYRUM, B.A.**

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RALEIGH, N. C.  
PRESSES OF EDWARDS & BROUGHTON PRINTING COMPANY,  
1908



## Preface

My aim in this little pamphlet has been to compile facts instead of gathering flowers. A great deal of my information has been gathered from members of the old church who are still living. In gathering this material I sought to have one man's statement corroborated by another in order that I might be certain of the correctness of memory. There are sketches of good men which I had to omit in this pamphlet for the lack of space and information. There may be some mistakes, but I have tried to be true to the material in hand. This is sent forth with the hope that it may inspire a more fertile brain to give a fuller account than is here given.

J. T. BYRUM.

August 14, 1908.



## **An Introduction to the History of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church**

Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church, Chowan County, North Carolina, was constituted in 1781. The church house is situated on a beautiful level spot of land which falls almost abruptly into a pond, known as the Dillard's mill-pond, one of the tributaries of the Chowan River. Its grove consists very largely of pines and oaks many of which are the primeval growth. The church building stands near the road, known as the Virginia road, leading from Suffolk to Edenton, in a beautiful and wealthy farming section of Chowan County. It is one mile from Small's cross-roads; about two miles from Cannon's ferry, a famous fishing beach on the Chowan River; and about fifteen miles of Edenton, the county seat of Chowan County.

It is somewhat difficult to find out just when and how Baptist influence reached the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge. Moore, in his History of North Carolina, states that Sir William Berkley, Governor of Virginia, drove from that colony, in 1653, the Baptists and Quakers, who found refuge in the region near Albemarle Sound in North Carolina. This seems to be trustworthy history, since there is now a Quaker meeting-house located in Perquimans County near the line between the counties of Perquimans and Chowan. Morgan Edwards says there were Baptists in North Carolina as early as 1695, and Dr. Hawks, in enumerating the freeholders in several eastern counties of North Carolina, gives the names of many Baptists, and among them two ministers of the Gospel—Paul Palmer, a native of Maryland, and William Burgers.

There seems to be no doubt that there were Baptists in the eastern part of the State as early as 1695, but the Baptist principle moved very slowly. The Baptists were few in number and they had to meet opposition on every hand.

It is very evident that they had to stem the torrent of an indifferent and godless age. They labored on with undaunted courage, and in 1727 the first Baptist church in North Carolina was organized in Camden County by Paul Palmer. This church still exists and is called Shiloh.

In 1729, the Meherrin Church, which is located near Murfreesboro, in Hertford County, North Carolina, was founded by Joseph Parker, who was ordained by Paul Palmer of Camden County. This church granted letters to some of her members who organized Sandy Run Church, in Bertie County. No doubt but that Baptist influence from Bertie and Hertford counties reached Chowan, since both of these counties join Chowan County. Baptist influence from Yeo-pim Church, which was organized near Edenton in 1775, may have reached the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge; but we may safely say that the most direct way was through the earnest preaching of Lemuel Burkitt.

Henry Abbott, who left England while young and came to this country without his father's permission, joined the Baptist denomination, and afterwards became a strong, enthusiastic minister of the Gospel. During his ministry, he and Lemuel Burkitt became intimate friends. Several years before Ballard's Bridge Church was organized Lemuel Burkitt and Henry Abbott held a great meeting in Amelia County, Virginia. When the meeting closed, Burkitt and Abbott journeyed together until they arrived at Suffolk. There they separated. Abbott returned to his home in Camden County by way of Deep Creek, and Mr. Burkitt journeyed through Gates County on his way towards Edenton. During that day's travel, he became alarmed at the irreligious condition of the people; for it seemed to him that every person had turned willingly and cheerfully to his own way, forgetting Him who has laid upon Himself the iniquity of us all. He stopped that night at the home of a man named Welch in the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge. He retired, fell

asleep, and dreamed an angel appeared to him with a map of the territory over which he had just traveled showing three roads leading from Suffolk on which the Gospel had not been preached. The angel commanded him to secure the help of Elder Jonathan Thomas, who was a man of talent, very affable in his address, and a great orator; or Elder Jeremiah Dargan, a remarkable, pious Christian, and a very zealous minister of the Gospel, and preach twice at each of the places indicated. Mr. Dargan was at that time holding meetings near the head waters of the Albemarle Sound. Dargan soon received the message and immediately accompanied Burkitt to do the work which they believed God had assigned to them. They made the tour which resulted in the conversion of Elder David Welch, who afterwards became pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church. In a short while the church was organized.

Rev. J. A. Speight, D.D., in his History of Middle Swamp Baptist Church, speaks thus of Lemuel Burkitt during the night spent at the home of Welch, while Burkitt was on his journey towards Edenton:

"Elder Burkitt spent that night at the home of a man named Welch at Ballard's Bridge, and on retiring for rest gave himself up to the sad, sad thought that in all that day's ride he had not seen a single Christian man or woman. During that night like Jacob of old, his rest was greatly disturbed by his dreams, so much so that he felt that his dream must be from God. Out of that dream which to him seemed like an oracle of God, and putting it in practical Christian service grew Ballard's Bridge Church."

In connection with the history of this church which has wielded such a powerful influence for the promotion of God's kingdom in Chowan County, and which stands to-day as a monument to the memory of this great and good man, it seems only fitting here to give a brief sketch of the life of this old veteran of the cross who finished his pilgrimage with

honor to himself and credit to the denomination in which he labored.

At his death there was a short sketch of his life entered upon the old church record of Sandy Run, in Bertie County. This was recently collected for publication by Thomas M. Pittmann. It reads as follows:

“A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE LIFE, MINISTRY,  
AND DEATH OF LEMUEL BURKITT, LATE PASTOR OF  
CHRIST’S CHURCH AT SANDY RUN.

“Elder Lemuel Burkitt was born about the year 1750, in Chowan County, of religious parents. Received a good English education. It was the will of God to convert his soul at the age of eighteen, and being convinced of the necessity of believer’s baptism as a worthy example laid down by his divine Master, was baptized by Elder Henry Abbott in Pasquotank River, July, 1771, and began to preach the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ immediately. His father intended him for the law, but his Heavenly Father called him and justified him for a much more honorable office, to be an able minister of the New Testament to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to the Gentile world. It is difficult to give a just narrative of the first several years of this pious man’s labors, as there are but few living at this time who are able to follow him in that part of his ministry. But in his travels God was pleased to send him to visit the church at Sandy Run, who had lost their pastor (James Abington), who was their former pastor. Iniquity abounded and the love of many waxed cold. But there were a few names which remained steadfast and orderly church members. The great desire they had for a reformation and revival in the church induced them to petition the Association in 1772 for advice in this matter. The Association, taking the same under consideration, appointed Elders Jonathan Thomas, John Moore, and Lemuel Burkitt to attend them, who accordingly attended the church, and in conference being assembled, ad-

vised the church to relate their experience and come under a reexamination, which they did. The church then established on a new constitution, made choice of Lemuel Burkitt for their pastor, who was accordingly ordained by Elders Thomas and Maglamre, November, 1773, in which capacity he remained during his natural life; he labored in the ministry upwards of thirty-four years. But we may venture to say that there are but few that hath equaled for indefatigable labors and happy success in his pious office. He was a man of strong and steady mind, was well acquainted with men, was a close reasoner, was remarkably methodical in the arrangement of his discourse, and truly orthodox in his theological sentiments, which his writings that are extant will verify. His discourse was generally well adapted to suit the state of religion and the situation of the times when and where he preached; was warm in his address so that he never failed of drawing the attention of his audience, and seldom closed his subject without part of the assembly were in tears.

“His zeal for the cause of God was bold and persevering, was instrumental under the Divine Master in bringing many souls to the knowledge of the truth, and more particularly in his latter days his conversation was most turned on the subject of religion. His acquaintances and those who had experienced religion were ever pleased with the mildness of his words and meekness of his expressions. About the year of our Lord 1801 religion appeared to be at a very low ebb in North Carolina. About this time and the year following a glorious work of the Lord took place in the States of Tennessee and Kentucky. The good news reached these regions, when Elder Burkitt set out to realize the truth of common report. After surmounting the fatigues of climbing the lofty mountains in his old age, he reached those States where the wonderful works of God were displaying the trophies of divine grace. His soul caught the seraphic flame. He preached almost night and day for several weeks in those States with

great acceptance, then returned home fired with an ardent zeal surpassing anything we before had seen; communicated the same amongst his own and adjacent churches. Soon after his return, set out to traveling and spent the greater part of his time in preaching day and night. Repeatedly would leave the pulpit, come down among the people, fall on his knees, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, praying sinners in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

“From this a glorious revival of religion took place in the churches composing the Kehukee Association, of which he was a member, and in the space of two or three years several thousands were added and a number of new churches constituted. It appeared the revival broke out first in his own church, and it appeared his Lord and Master blessed his labors wherever he preached, and his conduct as a pastor and a preacher was truly amiable and interesting. Ever ready to give each one his portion of meat in due season, was ever faithful in the discharge of duty both to saint and sinner, ever ready to advise or instruct those who were blind and needy, and ever ready to give encouragement to those who were seeking to find rest to their souls—thus he continued laboring as a faithful servant in the Lord's vineyard, as an example of piety, until as (himself observed just before his death) his work was done, which appeared in the pulpit, when he was taken with an ague and after a long and painful illness, which he bore with more than common fortitude and resignation to the last moment of his life. And as his life was remarkable for piety and zeal, so was his death for joy and confidence. Whilst going he sung his soul away into the expanded arms of his compassionate Redeemer on the 5th day of November, in the year of our Lord 1807, aged 57 years, and it may truly be said this day, a great man of God is fallen in Israel. Thus it hath pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to take to Himself this amiable character. He has thrown off every burden and has escaped from every

snare; the head aches no more, the eyes that have so often wept for poor sinners will weep no more; he has received a final release from trouble and pain and an everlasting discharge from sorrow.

“In the death of this great man of God the church of which he was pastor has sustained a severe and almost irreparable loss, the churches of the Baptist Society a warm, generous, benevolent friend, his afflicted wife and children a kind, tender, affectionate husband and parent, his servants an indulgent master, the community at large a consistent and true friend. Elder Burkitt was a true Republican, and was a member of the convention when the Federal Constitution was about to be adopted. His funeral sermon was preached by Elder Spivey on the fourth Lord’s day in November, 1807, to a numerous and attentive audience from Paul’s 2d Epistle to Timothy, 4th chapter, 6, 7, 8 verses.”



## History of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church

As the old records of the early history of Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church were consumed by fire from its constitution in 1781 to the 8th day of Mach, 1818, and the records from 1818 to August 16, 1848, have been lost, I must depend very largely for my information from the memory of those who are still living. This I consider to be trustworthy history.

The earnest appeals of the Gospel presented by Rev. Lemuel Burkitt and other ministers who were colaborers with him aroused a deep interest in the people in the neighborhood of Ballard's Bridge. Soon this Christian influence was manifested, and through the untiring efforts of Rev. Lemuel Burkitt, the people came together and built a house of worship prior to June, 1780, as shown by the deed.

The land upon which Ballard's Bridge Church now stands was donated by William Bond, of Edenton. The deed was given June 26, 1780. In 1781, the church was organized as Ballard's Bridge Baptist Church.

It may be interesting just here to quote the deed. The deed appears as follows:

"Deed of Gift:

"Know all men by these presents that I, William Bond, son of Lewis Bond, of the Province of North Carolina and County of Chowan; for the love and esteem I bear to the Baptist Society and for the desire I have to promote religion, I do give unto them a certain parcel of land situated in the county aforesaid near Ballard's Bridge for the use of a meeting-house where the meeting-house now stands; the said land being laid off round the meeting-house as follows:

"Beginning at the main road at a red oak marked tree then by a line of marked trees near a west course to a white

oak a corner tree, then by a line of marked trees near a south course to Ballard's Creek Swamp; then up the said swamp to the road; then along the road to the first station, containing about two acres of land, be the same more or less, which I promise to warrant and defend the same, and to make a good right and title to the Baptist Society forever with all the rights and privileges thereto belonging. To have and to hold and to enjoy the same free from all lawful claims or demands of any person whatsoever, and this my gift and for the certainty of this being my free consent and gift, I hereunto set my hand and seal, this the 26th day of June, 1780.

WILLIAM BOND. (Seal.)

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Josiah Speight."

The first church house is said to have been a log building. How long they worshiped in this building, it is impossible to say, or when the next house was built; there is no record. It is natural to suppose that the Christian influence was like the leaven hid in the meal.

In 1846, people began to manifest great interest in the Gospel message, so much so that they flocked to the church on preaching days in such numbers that the old house became insufficient to accommodate the congregation. It was in this year, 1846, that a contract for a new building was let out to the lowest bidder. William H. Elliott was the contractor, at the sum of \$1,400. When, in 1847, the contract was completed, Dr. Richard Dillard, William J. Holley, and William H. Elliott gave \$100.00 each, and Mr. John G. Small gave \$50.00. Not one of these gentlemen had ever made any profession of religion at that time, and were not members of any church. In May, 1848, the new house was dedicated. The sermon was preached by Quinton H. Trotman, who has been called the "prince of preachers," to a large and attentive audience. In August, 1848, a protracted meeting was held in the new building, lasting one week, when Wil-

liam H. Elliott, with 148 more, professed religion, and after they were baptized, united with Ballard's Bridge Church. Mr. Elliott was a man of wealth and remained a good, consistent member of the old church until his death, giving largely of his means to forward the Lord's cause at his old church.

The church house which was built by Mr. Elliott is still standing, but it has been repaired once. In September, 1883, the church met in a regular monthly meeting and let out the house for repair to the lowest bidder. John M. Forehand became the lowest bidder, at \$570.00. The work was to be done according to contract, which was completed. Mr. Forehand is still living and is a member of Ballard's Bridge Church. He is a prominent man in his county, a man of wealth, and one of the most liberal members of his church.

#### PASTORS.

Rev. David Welch was the first pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church. Elder Welch was converted under the preaching of Elders Jeremiah Dargan and Lemuel Burkitt while they were on their preaching tour which was indicated in Burkitt's dream before Ballard's Bridge Church was organized. He held the pastoral care of the church until his death. It is almost certain that he served the church without any financial support from the church, as many pastors at that day believed it to be wrong to make any charge for preaching the Gospel.

After the death of Elder Welch, the church was without a pastor for a few years. There is no available record of this trying period, but it is fair to presume that the dear old church house was not forsaken by God's humble servants, who were led by God to assemble at His house for communion and worship.

At length Elder John M. Calé took the pastoral care of the church. He held this charge until about the year 1804.

Then the church was again left pastorless. I have been unable to secure any further record of this man.

Elder John Nowel became her next occasional pastor and so continued during his life. It is very evident that he served the church without any financial remuneration for his labor.

After the death of Elder Nowel, Elder Nathaniel Pruden took occasional charge during his life. He was born in Gates County in 1781, the year in which Ballard's Bridge Church was organized. It will be remembered that in this same year, October 19, 1781, Lord Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington at Yorktown. He was the first pastor of Middle Swamp Baptist Church and continued so until his death in 1815. He was a man of enthusiasm and power, and much of his time was spent in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His preaching was acceptable to the people with whom and for whom he labored, and God greatly blessed his efforts.

Rev. J. A. Speight, D.D., in his History of Middle Swamp Baptist Church, speaks thus of Nathaniel Pruden:

"Nathaniel Pruden was the first pastor [that is, of Middle Swamp Church]. The opportunity and the man seemed to have met, for, like his Master and John the Baptist, his pure model of life and noble principle of action set his life on fire to save souls; for his preaching was like a pent-up force throbbing with audible and intolerable longing after the lost, as his eyes swept over fields of sin which he believed were ripe for the harvest. Like a doe panting for the brook and with the flush of victory on his face and the shout of triumph on his lips, he sickened and died. \* \* \* \* Like the prophet of old, his life caught on fire in death and while friends wept and angels gazed, he bared himself out of time and went home to glory."

At the death of Nathaniel Pruden, the church was again destitute of a pastor for some little time. It is impossible

to say how long, or obtain an accurate account of affairs of the church during these years.

About the year 1812, a revival took place, and many were added to the membership of the church. There were two, Miles Welch and John Jordan, among this number who were divinely impressed that the Lord had a great work for them to do in preaching the Gospel. Soon they began to fulfill their mission in warning sinners to flee the wrath to come.

About the year 1818, Elder Miles Welch was ordained to the full work of the Gospel ministry by Elders Jesse Reid and Thomas Gardner. In 1826, he took the pastoral care of Ballard's Bridge Church and served until 1837. He received very little or no pay for preaching the Gospel. The church offered to pay him, but he objected to it on the ground that it was selling the Gospel. At the close of his preaching, he stated that he had never charged anything for preaching and he was glad that he hadn't; for it is not right.

Elder William White was the next pastor. He was born in Chowan County in 1784 and reared in a Quaker family. He was in the thirty-second year of his age when he confessed faith in Christ and joined Ballard's Bridge Church. No doubt but that his Quaker environments had a great influence in causing him to delay connecting himself with the Baptist denomination. The church called him as her pastor in 1837, only three years after his conversion. He held this station for twelve years. Though entering the ministry at an advanced age, he gathered many sheaves into the garner. He closed his ministry with honor to himself and credit to the denomination in which he labored.

It is said of him, by those who knew him best, that he exemplified in his life Paul's portraiture of charity. So, when the hour of his departure was at hand, he could look with unclouded eyes to the mountains of everlasting joy on the other shore.

In 1848, during the ministry of Elder White, the Chowan

Baptist Association met with the church at Ramoth Gilead and adopted some religious principles with which the church at Ballard's Bridge did not agree. In the conference held in April, 1849, just before the meeting of the next Association, the church requested the clerk, Mr. Thomas Satterfield, to prepare a letter of correspondence in which he should insist that the church was opposed to the declaration of the religious principles which were adopted by the Association, and that they were going to take the New Testament as a guide for their faith and practice.

When Elder White closed his ministry at Ballard's Bridge, the church was able to look to one of her own members to take his place. The church on May 12, 1849, recommended Daniel V. Etheridge to the next Association for examination and ordination, according to the resolution passed by the Chowan Association in 1834:

"Resolved, That this Association recommend to the churches that, whenever they wish one of their members ordained, they send him up to the Association for examination and ordination."

This plan was finally abandoned and the ordination of ministers remanded to the church when and where only it properly belongs.

Elder Etheridge was ordained August 9, 1849. The presbytery was composed of Elders Quinton H. Trotman, Aaron Jones, and Thomas Waff. Elder Etheridge was a man of prayer and a fluent speaker. On September 8, 1849, he was duly elected pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church. He served the first year without any pastoral support from the church. In January, 1851, the church agreed to pay the pastor \$150.00 which was to be raised by taxation. On the next meeting this motion was remanded and the raising of money for the pastor was put into the hands of the deacons with some other chosen members. They agreed to pay him \$127.00. His salary varied during his ministry which finally closed December, 1869.

His ministry was marked by a general home-coming of sinners, who did not wait for special seasons of revivals to join the church. Up to the Civil War his ministry seemed to have been quiet and progressive, but then came a clash which has no equals in the annals of the history of this church. This was a time that tried men's souls. It looked as if the whole church would be wrecked when the war came on. As the war clouds gathered thick and threatening over our country, there were mutterings of vengeance, threatenings of calamity, forecasts of disaster, visions of conflict in the church at Ballard's Bridge.

Many of her members were slaveholders and a number of these slaves were members of Ballard's Bridge Church. The slaveowners desired to retain their slaves, and they sought to secure aid through the church with reference to their holding them. They were wealthy and influential men in the church, and they succeeded in influencing the church to adopt the following resolution in June, 1862:

"Resolved, That if any colored member leave home for the purpose of getting with the Yankees, he or she shall be expelled from the church."

In June, 1863, they passed another resolution:

"Resolved, That all white members that have taken up arms and aided the enemy of our country, and all colored members that have run off from their owners for the purpose of gaining Yankee freedom, be and they are hereby expelled from the church."

Elder Etheridge was a Union man. He preached that secession was not Scriptural and stood for what he believed to be right. He desired to do only those things which would meet the approbation of his great "Task Master." A part of the members stood firm with Elder Etheridge, the other part stood for the Confederacy. In a short while Elder Etheridge was charged with acting inconsistently in visiting the camps of the enemy, known as "buffaloes," and preach-

ing doctrines detrimental to the cause of the Southern Confederacy. A committee was appointed to investigate the charge against Elder Etheridge. After two months investigation, they reported that they were unable to find proof of a single charge. In a short while Elder Etheridge confessed before the church that he had acted unwisely, and that he would be more careful the next time. On motion Elder Etheridge was unanimously forgiven, but his ministry was greatly crippled.

On account of this trouble, Mr. Isaac Byrum, a faithful servant of God and afterwards a deacon, was chosen moderator for the year 1863. Elder Etheridge was reelected moderator in 1864 and continued his work until 1869. In this year, the strife between the brethren, which took its rise during the war, reached its final culmination. In January, 1869, the clerk, Richard D. Simpson, read out a petition of about fifty members asking letters of dismission to organize another church in the same house. This petition, after some debate, was voted down. Then a part of them withdrew, organized, and called Elder T. J. Knapp for their pastor, and chose their Sunday for preaching. This is known as the "great split" in the church. This state of affairs did not exist long. At the close of the year 1869, Elder Etheridge left the church and went to Roanoke Island where, it is said, he joined the Disciple Baptists and finally left the ministry. Elder T. J. Knapp soon left and went to Indiana and joined the Episcopal church.

Elder West Leary was the next pastor. There is but little record of this man or his work at Ballard's Bridge. He came to this church when she was in a low spiritual condition. He served three years, 1870-1873. The church agreed to pay him \$125.00 certain, or \$150.00 if the church could raise it. There were some additions to the church under his ministry.

Then Daniel J. Roberts took charge of the church for two

years, 1873 and 1874, at a salary of \$135.00. There was one great revival during his ministry in which there were fifty-eight additions to the church.

After two years service by Elder Roberts, the church called Rev. West Leary the second time. He served four more years, ending December, 1878.

Elder T. T. Speight was the next pastor. He served the church nine years. His ministry was a benediction and a source of great strength to the church. During his ministry, there were some great revivals with 208 additions to the church. At the close of his ministry the church numbered 481 members, and it is said that the missionary spirit increased fourfold.

Elder Speight was born in Gates County and reared in a Christian home. His father, Henry Speight, was a Baptist minister. Brother Speight served in the Civil War, came home, and was convicted of his sins in a great revival held at Middle Swamp church in 1866. He was convicted of sin on Saturday afternoon, but it was about four o'clock next morning, after an all-night prayer meeting at his old home when the vision of gloom was lifted from his soul. He returned to the church next day with a message of a loving Saviour to hardened sinners. "A divine spell seemed to hang about him as his words, like thunderbolts, bored their way with quenchless zeal into the hearts and lives and consciences of sinners old and young."

For the lack of information, I am unable to follow accurately the ministerial career of this good man. "His ministry has built up the cause of Christ, edified and made glad the saints of God, and to the unconverted his sermons have seemed God-filled and eternity-enclosed." When his labors on earth shall have ended, he will continue to live and work through the many souls whom he has led to Christ and who, out of hearts filled with cherished memories, will speak in adoring praise of this great man of God.

Elder A. W. Burfoot was the next pastor, who rendered faithful and efficient service to the church for six years. The church found in him a good under shepherd. He was meek and gentle, a faithful exponent of the Gospel, ready at all times to cry down evil on every hand, and exalt virtue and righteousness above all things else. During his ministry at the church he baptized 94 persons, and many others were added to the church by letter and restoration.

To my regret I have been unable to gather some interesting facts about this man's life prior to his ministry at Ballard's Bridge. If my memory serve me correctly, he was an old Confederate soldier, who was wounded in the Civil War. He made a profound impression upon me as an earnest Christian with a shepherd's heart. It was during his ministry that I was converted, and baptized at the head of a list of 28 into the fellowship of Ballard's Bridge Church on October 8, 1893. All that ever heard him long can not fail to remember the melody of his voice, and his tender appeals to sinners through the Gospel which he preached. We loved him for his stainless purity, his shining character as a Christian gentleman, his devout and humble piety, his unswerving loyalty to truth, as he saw it, and to God in so far as he was able to apprehend Him.

Elder C. J. Woodson followed A. W. Burfoot as pastor and served the church two years. He conducted one protracted meeting at the church, the result of which he baptized twenty-three candidates. He was a man who spoke with enthusiasm and power, not fearing to speak his mind. His manner of speaking was a little quaint in that he would often close his eyes at intervals during his discourse.

"Bro Woodson was raised in Amelia County, Virginia; was converted and joined the Presbyterian church. He moved to Richmond, Va., and entered upon the practice of law. He was in the capitol building in Richmond when the building fell and was caught with a vast number of others

in the debris. Crushed and bruised and suffocating from lime dust, his soul caught a view of God which it never had before, and his last resolve before losing consciousness was to promise God if rescued he would obey Him in Christian baptism and spend the remainder of his life in preaching the Gospel. He was pulled from under the rubbish in a senseless condition, but he kept his promise to his soul and to his God."

Elder Willie B. Waff took charge as pastor of Ballard's Bridge, January, 1896, and served faithfully and well for ten years. During his faithful ministry, there was an additional average of twenty members each year. There was a growth in the spirit of giving. The first year of his pastorate, the church gave for missions and benevolence \$129.83. The last year the church gave \$259.86. Some years, when there were special objects, such as the Baptist University, C. B. F. Institute, and the Orphanage, the church gave over \$400.00 a year. During the year 1903, the church gave \$492.32. The church paid Bro. Waff \$250.00 for his service. When he left, there was a good missionary society connected with the church doing some good work for the Master.

Elder Waff was no pulpit orator; but those who sought to know God's will and were hungering for the truth found in him a faithful exponent of God's word. It was my exalted privilege to spend one school year in his home. His pure example, and the gentle spirit which characterized his home life showed that he lived the Gospel as well as preached the Gospel. To the memory of this great and good man, my heart will ever respond in cheerful and loving recognition. It was he who lent a helping hand and spoke a cheering word in my time of sore need.

Bro. Willie B. Waff, the son of James T. and Elizabeth B. Waff, was born in Chowan County, North Carolina, six miles below Edenton, in 1853. When a babe, some young people, who were visiting his home, had a candy pulling,

and when the boiling molasses was poured into a dish, the babe crawled up to the dish and thrust his right hand into the hot molasses. The burn caused a badly drawn and crooked hand for the remainder of life.

It was his good fortune to be reared in a Christian home and from early childhood he has been connected with the Sunday School, either as scholar, teacher, or superintendent. At the early age of thirteen he professed religion and was baptized into the fellowship of Yeopim Baptist Church by Elder West Leary who was once pastor of Ballard's Bridge Church.

He worked on his father's farm and went to school at intervals. In January, 1873, he entered Reynoldson Male Institute, in Gates County, where he spent three years, first under Mr. J. F. Howell, and then under his brother, T. E. Waff, who took charge of the school there in the fall of '73. His father moved up there in the winter of '76 for the purpose of educating his children. He taught one year near Carsville, Virginia, and in September, 1877, went to Wake Forest College, where he spent three years, taking the B. A. degree in June, 1880. Soon after he matriculated at Wake Forest College, his money gave out and dark days came. His brother sought to borrow money for him from a rich man in Gates County, but he charged 10 per cent interest and real estate security, which he was unable to give. It looked for a while as if he would have to leave college, but in this time of need the Lord gave him a friend in the person of Mr. John E. Ray, then teacher at the Deaf and Dumb Institution in Raleigh, who let him have the much needed money on his personal note and at 6 per cent interest. Thus a heavy burden was lifted from his heart. He stood well in his classes, and at the close of his first year took the Whitfield Latin medal. After his graduation, he taught school two years in Davidson County and one year in Forsyth County. While up there, he was happily married to Miss Willie T. Trayn-

ham, who still shares with him the joys and sorrows of life. While he was teaching, he took an active part in both church and Sunday School work. He frequently conducted prayer meeting, and sometimes in the absence of the pastor conducted the monthly service.

In the summer of 1883, he returned to Reynoldson to assist his brother in teaching. There he was deeply impressed with the idea of preaching, and after a long struggle with the question, he decided to preach the Gospel. In August, 1884, he was licensed by Reynoldson Church, and at the next meeting, the church, being without a pastor, called him to supply for them through the remainder of the year. Then he was elected pastor and in January, 1885, was ordained by Elders R. R. Overby and T. T. Speight. He served Reynoldson Church 22 years and 3 months. He was appointed by the Yeopim Union to labor as a missionary at two points in Gates County, at each of which he built up a church, Ariel and Beulah. He labored at Ariel five years and at Beulah ten years. He served Middle Swamp Church six years and Cool Spring Church seven years. Sixteen years mark the period of his service at Great Fork, Virginia. He held the pastorate at Gatesville and Ballard's Bridge each ten years. After leaving Ballard's Bridge, he served Macedonia Church one year, and then took up a field of work near Murfreesboro, where he is now rendering efficient and much appreciated service for the Master. During his faithful ministry all of his churches have made commendable progress, there being a marked growth in liberality. His people recognized him as a kind under-shepherd. He was highly esteemed by the people for whom and with whom he labored. When he left the Yeopim Union, the people recognized him as one of the strongest and foremost leaders in the Union.

Elder J. N. Booth was the next pastor. After serving one month, he resigned to take a field in South Carolina.

Elder J. O. Alderman followed Elder Booth, taking charge

in February, 1906. He is pastor now. Soon after Bro. Alderman took charge as pastor, the sickness of his wife and his own ill health prevented our getting the full value of his fertile mind, but the church kept pace in liberality and Christian interest with her past records and is now making some progress. It is impossible here to give the full estimate of his worth. He is still in the din of battle, but it is hoped that when his labors with us shall have ended, the most brilliant record in the history of this church may then be written.

#### CLERKS.

The first clerk of Ballard's Bridge of whom there is any record was Mr. Baker F. Welch, who served the church in the capacity of clerk from 1840 to about 1847. Mr Welch was a prominent man in his county. He represented Chowan County in the lower house of the Legislature of North Carolina from 1832 to 1834 as a Henry Clay Whig. He was also a Justice of the Peace in his county for many years.

Mr. Thomas Satterfield was the next clerk. He served the church until his death, in 1853. He was a good man, much beloved and highly esteemed by his brethren.

Richard D. Simpson was the next clerk. He served the church from February, 1853, to July, 1866. J. A. Ward succeeded Richard D. Simpson as clerk, which position he held until December, 1871. Then Edward Pearce was elected clerk and served for fifteen years. Mr. Pearce is still living and is a man of influence in his church and county. Miles W. Elliott was the next clerk. He served the church faithfully and well from January, 1888-1898. Then George H. Baker was elected clerk. He is serving now. Mr. Baker is a good man, an earnest Christian, and a faithful clerk.

#### MINISTERS AND LAYMEN.

In the ministry this church has given to the world some ministers and laymen who have labored and are laboring to

bless humanity. For the lack of information and space, only a few can be mentioned here:

Elder John Asplund was born in Sweden and trained for mercantile pursuits. He went to England as a clerk in 1775. Having left the mercantile business, he joined the British navy and served as a sailor for some time. At length he deserted the British navy and settled in Eastern North Carolina.

In 1782, a year after Ballard's Bridge Church was organized, he was converted and baptized into the fellowship of Ballard's Bridge Church by Elder David Welch, the first pastor. He afterwards moved to Southampton County, Virginia, and was ordained. Then he spent several years traveling through Northern Europe. On his return, he made a tour of the Baptist churches of the United States to obtain the necessary information for his "Baptist Register" which he published in 1791. In his introduction he says: "I have traveled about 7,000 miles in about eighteen months, *chiefly on foot*, and visited about 215 churches and fifteen Associations. Having been brought up with a view to business of merchandise, I am accustomed to keeping accounts; and I now prefer accounts of souls with their faces set Zionward, to those which only respect money or trade. I have a natural turn for traveling, and I am convinced that I could not better spend my time than in itinerating to preach the Gospel and to collect material which may assist the future historian." He afterwards traveled 10,000 miles, and published another Register in 1794. It is said that Morgan Edwards, Isaac Backus, R. B. Semple, and John Asplund are the greatest literary benefactors of American Baptists. He was drowned while attempting to cross Fishing Creek, Virginia, in 1807. "The literary work of this Swedish American is rare and costly."

John Jordan was a minister who was converted in a great revival about 1812. I have no further record of this man.

Mr. James Goodwin, who, at the time of his marriage with Mrs. Catherine Satterfield, the widow of James Satterfield, was a member of the Methodist church, his wife being a member of Ballard's Bridge. No doubt but that it was through the influence and gentle persuasion of his pious wife that he was induced to join the church at Ballard's Bridge, in November, 1846. He was a good and kind man, and became a Baptist minister from the time of his conversion until his death in 1854.

Elder Thomas Brownrig was born in Chowan County, in 1769. In his early life he was a bitter opposer to religion and the church. In 1816, then in his 47th year, he confessed faith in Christ and joined Ballard's Bridge Church. From the time of his conversion, he was an active, useful and well-beloved member in his church.

Mr. Andrew A. Parish was a pious, godly man. Being fully persuaded in his own mind that he was called of God to preach, he applied for license from the church. The church immediately recommended him to the favorable consideration of the churches and especially to the confidence and favor of the Board of Education at Wake Forest College. He labored for a while as a colporteur in the bounds of the Yeopim Union meeting, and did some supply work. By some reason or other, he failed to attend college and finally gave up the idea of preaching and went back to his farm where he lived a quiet Christian life. He was killed by a falling tree.

#### NEGRO SLAVES.

There were negro slaves who held their membership at Ballard's Bridge Church as early as 1800. Many were members during the Civil War, and some held their membership at the old church long after their emancipation. Slaves got permission from their masters to join the church, and they were allowed to attend church, as the church was provided

with a gallery for accommodation of slaves. There were negro slave preachers who held protracted meetings under bush shelters by permission of their masters. They had big revivals, after their manner, and not one of them could read a single word. They preached repentance and used the word "hell-fire" as a means to scare sinners. When they repented, they fell prostrate on their backs, and when they *came through*, they had to be tied to prevent their hurting themselves. They were baptized by white preachers until after the war.

During a protracted meeting at the church, the negroes were very emotional. Often while the preacher was in the midst of his discourse, they could be heard in the gallery crying out, "Dat's right, brudder, tell it!" It is said on one occasion while a big revival was in progress, an old colored woman began shouting and she raised so much disturbance that they had to carry her out into the grove. They laid her down under a large oak and she cried out: "I see my red-headed sweet Jesus up the tree." As it happened some one looked up the tree and saw a red-headed woodpecker. After the Civil War most of them took letters and organized a colored church known as Welch's Chapel.

Ballard's Bridge Church is the mother of Middle Swamp Church, which was organized in 1806. In 1860, she granted letters of dismission to twenty-one members to help in the organization of Warwick Swamp Church.

#### BENEVOLENCE AND MISSIONS.

As far back as there is any record, the church has aided the poor of her congregation. Her members gave to the support of the Bible Review Society in 1853. In 1860, the church offered to pay her proportional part with sister churches in the support of a missionary and colporteur in the bounds of the Yeopim Union Meeting. She also gave to the support of colportage work among the soldiers during the

war. The first record of her giving to the support of Home and Foreign Missions was in 1865. She also aided the Indian Domestic Mission Board. She has helped to support both the Orphanage Asylum at Oxford and at Thomasville. She has borne her share of the burden of the C. B. F. Institute and other educational institutions.

Some of the members were subscribers to the Baptist Messenger as early as 1850. Since then they have been subscribers to the *Biblical Recorder*, *Charity and Children*, and other religious papers.

#### ASSOCIATIONS.

The church first belonged to the old Kehukee Association. The Kehukee Annual Association was held at Davis's meeting-house on Roanoke, in Halifax County, North Carolina, in May, 1783. At this Association there were appointed four occasional associations to be held in 1783. One of these met at Ballard's Bridge in August of this same year. Then the Association agreed to divide: Virginia have one and North Carolina have one each year.

The Chowan Association was constituted in 1806 with 40 churches, and Ballard's Bridge has been a member of this Association since that time. The Chowan Association has met with the Church at Ballard's Bridge four times since: (1) In 1816, (2) in 1840, (3) in 1866, (4) in 1892.

#### SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

In 1849, the church seeing the increased demand for Scriptural teaching and training of the children in the vicinity of Ballard's Bridge, and realizing the responsibility resting upon the church to win them for Christ, for the church, and for a life of usefulness in His service, agreed that the members should establish a Sunday School or schools in the neighborhood of the church.

The first Sunday School of which I have any record was

organized at Deep Run, about 1852. The first superintendent was Stephen Saunders, a member of Ballard's Bridge Church. The church assisted Bro. Saunders in his work, and took up collections from time to time which were appropriated for the purchasing of literature for the benefit of the school. The school ran on for several years, and it is said that Elder West Leary preached there as a mission station for a while. Andrew A. Parish, a young minister just starting out, succeeded Bro. Leary and held a protracted service there. He was assisted by Joseph M. Boyce, another aspirant for the ministry. For some unknown reason the work ceased.

Mr. Jack Churchill superintended a Sunday School for several years in a schoolhouse which stood near Small's cross-roads. Mr. Churchill was a prominent man, a singing master, and a member of Ballard's Bridge Church. It is supposed that other schools being organized in more convenient places was why his school ceased its work.

Griffin's schoolhouse was erected in 1850 by Nathaniel Griffin, a member of Ballard's Bridge Church. In 1852, he, assisted by Henry Hobbs, organized a Sunday School there. A man by the name of Battle, who drove a wagon through the country with books for the aid of Sunday Schools and for Christian influence in general, furnished the school with a library. In a few years this library was stolen and the school, feeling the great need of literature, applied to Ballard's Bridge, its mother and friend, for help. The church for a number of years took up collections to be used in buying literature for use in the school. There has been at least one revival service conducted at this place. It was conducted by Daniel Roberts. The meeting resulted in one conversion.

This school has not been an evergreen school each year. Some years they have had no school at all, but it is safe to say that the school has accomplished untold good in its immediate vicinity. Several years ago one important minis-

ter is reported to have said that from Wardville to Center Hill was one solid mass of ignorance. From this situation it can be easily seen that the school had to struggle for life at times. The following men have acted as superintendents at Griffin's School: Nathaniel Griffin, Henry C. Hobbs, George A. Griffin, Allen C. Ward, Asa Jennings, Jordan White, James Hobbs, Miles W. Elliott, William Hudson, Ekron D. White, and John Twine.

Gaulbury Sunday School was organized about 1866. This school has not been an evergreen school, and since its organization there have been years when there was no school at all; but this school has done some good work for the Master. It has given to the support of the Orphanage, sometimes sending boxes filled with valuable presents for the little children. The lives of some who have stood at the head of this school during the past years are worthy to adorn the pages of any history, but they can not be given here. The following people have superintended the school at Gaulbury: Henry C. Hobbs, Allen C. Ward, Martha Cannon, an excellent school-teacher, John Bunch, Andrew A. Parish, John Hall, an Englishman; Richard B. Hollowell, a deacon; E. T. Forehand, J. C. Eason, a deacon; James Askew, and J. B. Byrum.

About fifty years ago a Sunday School was organized in the vicinity of Wardville. It was then a mixed school of Quakers and Baptists. The Quakers were a source of great strength to the school in the way of teaching and supplying literature which it needed. It has long since, however, been recognized as a branch school of Ballard's Bridge, to whom it sends its reports. So far as I have been able to learn, it has been a good average branch Sunday School. Its record is not brilliant, but it has waged some battles in hand-to-hand conflict with sin, the enemy of all righteousness, the ever-living enemy of our souls, the enemy of God Himself. The school was planted here amid superstition, ignorance, and

sin; but there were men who loved God and sought to bless humanity to such an extent as to rise up against sin, and to stand guard over this Sunday School in its infancy with their prayers and with the drawn sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. It has had to struggle for existence at some time. If I make no mistake, for the lack of a building its sessions were held in a barn for a short while. Then for a while it was called the Barroom Sunday School, because it was carried on in a building which had been used, or was expected to have been used for a barroom. The school now holds its sessions in a building of its own. The school has given to the support of the Orphanage and to the dissemination of Bibles among the destitute.

May I now speak with a prophet's vision, forecasting the future, and say that in the years to come there will be a Baptist church here in which the Wardville Sunday School shall hold its sessions; and hand in hand with it an educational institution. So, as the rising generations are trained, they may be trained with a zeal for God and that according to knowledge.

The following men have superintended at Wardville: Isaac Byrum, Jephthah Ward, Josiah Copeland, Townsend Ward, Joe Berch, Alexander Copeland, Fletcher Parish, Allen Ward, George Ward, Caleb Ward, William Hudson, Thomas Smith, Jonathan Ward, J. T. Byrum, Millard Ward, Jesse Spivey, W. J. Byrum and Noah C. Ward.

Ballard's Bridge Church has been able to accomplish untold good through these her branch Sunday Schools. Truly it may be said that the Sunday School is the church at work. Doubtless many souls have been led to Christ by the faithful efforts of godly men and women who have labored in these Sunday Schools.

## CONCLUSION.

The history of this church is the history of her perils and deliverances. She has been in circumstances of peril. Her enemies have even labored to destroy her; and against these there have been the providence and promise of God. God has been the support and bulwark of His people. He has been in the midst of His church to preserve her; to extend her interest, and increase her glory. She has been assailed by powerful earthly adversaries, but she is invulnerable so long as she continues faithful to God.

## RULES OF DECORUM OF BALLARD'S BRIDGE CHURCH.

From a long series of experiences, we the Church of Christ, worshipping at Ballard's Bridge, are convinced of the necessity of convening together to worship God as often as convenient; and to hold conference to transact the business of the church, and watch over one another as Christ has commanded. Therefore,

*Resolved*, That the following decorum or set of rules be strictly observed in our conference:

1. We will not forsake assembling ourselves together at the house of God.

2. Conference shall be composed of the members of the church only, unless members from sister churches be present, then it shall be the duty of the moderator to invite them to seats with us who shall be entitled to all the privileges as members of the church, except that of voting upon any question that may be before the conference.

3. Conference shall be opened and closed by prayer to God.

4. One shall be chosen to preside over conference, who shall be addressed under the appellation of Brother Moderator, and unto him every speech shall be particularly addressed.

5. The names of the members being regularly enrolled

shall by the clerk be distinctly called over and a notable mark placed to the names of all absent male members.

6. An invitation shall be extended to all that may be desirous to become members of the church. None shall be admitted but by unanimous consent. The candidates shall first give satisfactory evidence of their faith in Christ, secondly, of a change of heart; thirdly, of their willingness to obey God in all His commands, and fourthly, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. When full satisfaction has been obtained, the pastor, or, in his absence, the moderator, shall extend to them the right hand of fellowship and shall receive them in due form.

7. No complaint shall be brought into conference of a private nature until the agreed parties have complied with the directions given by our Lord and Master as recorded in Matt. xviii. 15-17.

8. No member shall be expelled from the church for any crime, except gross immorality or flagrant violation of Christian character, without being first waited upon by a committee and cited to conference.

9. Every motion made and seconded shall come under the consideration of conference, unless withdrawn by the member who made it.

10. Every query presented shall be twice read, and before it is recorded the moderator shall take the question, and as it is decided so shall it be recorded, provided, however, the querist can withdraw the query at any time.

11. If the minority shall at any time be grieved at the determination of the majority, they are hereby directed to make the same known immediately to the church, and if satisfaction can not be obtained and it shall be necessary to call for help from sister churches, then in the case satisfaction is not given, it shall be the duty of the church to expel such members or member, believing the government according to the laws of Christ always rests with the church.

12. All the business done by conference shall be fairly recorded by the clerk and the same shall be read over distinctly and corrected, if need be, at the opening of the next conference.

13. Any male member failing to attend conference, the same is disorder, and for failing to attend for three successive meetings shall be waited on by a committee, whose duty it shall be to cite said absentee to the next conference, and he shall give reason of his absence in writing or in person.

14. Any male member leaving conference without liberty of conference the same is disorder.

15. If two or more shall speak at the same time, or any member sitting upon his seat speaking in good health without addressing the moderator, the same is disorder.

16. Any member speaking more than twice upon the same subject without permission of the moderator the same is disorder.

17. Any member being grieved at anything done in conference and shall hold his or her peace and not let the same be known until conference adjourns and shall afterwards speak of the same as not having fellowship therewith the same is hereby deemed disorder.

18. Any member speaking, or acting in wrath, anger, or in a threatening, degrading way, as it is opposed to religion, and wounds the feelings of the true Christian, the same is hereby deemed disorder.

19. If the moderator shall neglect to plainly and timely reprove any member transgressing any of these rules in time of conference the same is disorder in him and himself for the same is liable to be reprov'd.

#### RESOLUTIONS.

1. *Resolved*, That if any member of this church is known to be intoxicated with spirituous liquors, unless he confess the same, shall be waited upon by a committee and cited to

conference. For a second offense he shall be expelled from the church, unless he acknowledge his crime to the church, ask forgiveness, and promise not to repeat the offense, in which case he may be excused.

2. *Resolved*, That if any member of the church shall be engaged in buying and retailing spirituous liquors, he or she shall be expelled from the church.

3. *Resolved*, That if any male member fail to attend conference for the space of twelve months without a good excuse rendered he shall be expelled from the church.

4. *Resolved*, That if any member of this church be known to engage in dancing, card-playing, profanity, or if any allow dancing, or card-playing in their houses, they shall be expelled from the fellowship of the church unless they acknowledge their wrongs and promise to do so no more, in which case they may be excused.

5. *Resolved*, That if any male member fail to subscribe and pay to the support of the church by the end of each year, he shall be waited on by a committee; and if he fail to pay or give a good and lawful excuse by March meeting, he shall be expelled.

6. *Resolved*, That the church shall elect its pastor by ballot on Saturday before the second Sunday in August of each year.

7. *Resolved*, That the sexton shall be elected on Saturday before the second Sunday in September of each year.

8. *Resolved*, That the clerk, assistant clerk, and treasurer shall be elected Saturday before the second Sunday in December of each year.

9. WHEREAS, We believe the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, including wine as a beverage, to be detrimental to personal piety and inconsistent with a profession of religion. Therefore,

*Resolved*, That this church will not allow any of her members to engage in such practice.

## PRESENT CHURCH OFFICERS.

*Pastor*—J. O. Alderman.

*Deacons*—Edward Pearce, J. C. Eason, J. M. Forehand, W. H. Elliott, J. B. Byrum, J. L. Savage, W. D. Welch, W. J. Byrum.

*Clerk*—G. H. Baker.

*Treasurer*—J. L. Savage.

*Sexton*—J. V. Perry.

## MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

*President*—Jack Churchill.

*Secretary*—Benjamin Boyce.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL.

*Superintendent*—J. L. Savage.

As this Sunday School was omitted under the head of Sunday Schools, may it suffice to say here that this school has run only at intervals. It is safe to say, however, that great good has been accomplished through its efforts. The following men have acted as superintendents: J. M. Forehand, J. C. Eason, John T. Hollowell and J. L. Savage.







